REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in reply to the Office Action mailed on June 28, 2006. Claims 1-8, 10 and 32-37 are pending in the patent application. Claims 1, 32 and 37 have been amended. Claims 38, 39, and 40 have been added. A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is submitted with this response. No new matter has been added by this response.

Claims 1-8, 10, and 32-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,641,483 to Luciano et al. ("*Luciano*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,093,861 to Graham ("*Graham*"). Applicants disagree with and traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Amended claim 1 is directed to an apparatus for remotely and selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine. The apparatus includes a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms, each associated with one of the plurality of physical areas of the gaming machine. Each lock is physically movable between an unlocked and locked condition. The apparatus includes control circuitry independent of the gaming machine, having a processor that operates under the control of a stored program and is coupled to each of the lock mechanisms via a communications link. The apparatus also includes a data storage and retrieval system that is adapted to communicate with the processor and includes a storage medium for storing data and including personnel identification data and access authorization data indicative of the physical areas, if any, of the gaming machine to which a person seeking access is authorized. The apparatus further includes a data input device that is connected to the gaming machine and coupled to a processor. The data input device

enables a person to input at least their personnel identification data that identifies the person so that they can gain access to the plurality of physical areas of the gaming machine. The processor compares the personnel identification data inputted by the person with the personnel identification data stored by the storage media and causes the lock mechanisms of the plurality of physical areas (which the person is authorized to access) to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those plurality of physical areas when the personnel identification data inputted by the person matches any of the personnel identification data stored by the storage media.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that "applicant argues that Graham's processor does not control more than a single lock. This argument has already been answered. Applicant is referred to the previous office action." (See the Final Office Action, p. 5). Applicants, therefore, refer to the office action mailed on May 4, 2006, which states the following:

> Having a single processor control more than one door is so well known in the art that one of ordinary skill would understand Graham's disclosure to be teaching such a concept. Furthermore, Graham teaches that the system is intended for use in offices and hotels – places that may have hundreds of doors. Graham's system would not be of practical value if each of these hundreds of doors had to have it's own processor. It would be a nightmare to program such a system. Every time there was a change in personnel at a company employing a system where the processor control only one door, all the processors would have to be reprogrammed. It would be readily apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that a single processor should control all doors to a facility." (See the Office Action mailed on May 4, 2006, pp. 5-6).

The Examiner therefore states that it is obvious in view of *Graham* to have a central processor that controls a plurality of lock mechanisms such as those found at hotels or offices. But Applicants' claims 1, 2-8 and 10, require far more than this.

Applicants' claims 1, 2-8 and 10, state that when personnel identification data inputted by a person matches any of the personnel identification data stored by the storage medium of the gaming machine, the lock mechanisms of a plurality of the physical areas of the gaming machine move to the unlocked condition. This enables certain authorized persons, such as repairmen, to quickly access those plurality of physical areas of the gaming machine that they need to work on without having to spend significant time opening each individual lock associated with each of the plurality of physical areas.

Graham does not disclose or suggest unlocking or opening the lock mechanisms associated with a plurality of physical areas after a person inputs personnel identification data in an input device. In fact, *Graham* teaches away from such a system.

Graham is directed to enhancing security at buildings such as hotels and office complexes by providing an electric lock control system which has an improved pin code recognition device. (Col. 2, lines 58-60). Specifically, *Graham* discloses an access control system 50 which includes a strike control relay 51 responsive to control signals from a microprocessor 45 to control the opening and closing of a single access device, such as a lock or a striker associated with a lock. (Col. 6, lines 49-57). *Graham* discloses that an access code must be inputted or entered at each access device to unlock that access device. (Col. 5, line 61 to Col. 6, line 5; Col. 6, lines 49-57).

Graham does not disclose or suggest unlocking the lock mechanisms of a plurality of physical areas or access devices based on personnel identification data entered by a person at an input device such as a key card reader at a hotel or office because such a system would create significant safety and security issues.

For example, a guest in a hotel or the employee of a particular office in an office building, inputs their personnel identification data or pin code, or swipes a card including their personnel identification data or pin code, to unlock a door to access a particular physical area of a hotel or office such as that person's guest room or office suite. No other lock mechanisms are unlocked. Instead, the person has to input their personnel identification code at each door that they want to unlock and/or open. Unlocking a plurality of doors based on that single personnel identification data entry would allow unauthorized people to access different areas of the hotel or office and thereby decrease security. Therefore, *Graham* teaches away from the claimed invention because employing the claimed apparatus which unlocks the lock mechanisms of a plurality of physical areas based upon personnel identification data inputted by a person at an input device at a hotel or office would decrease security at those buildings instead of enhancing it.

Luciano does not remedy the deficiencies of *Graham*.

Accordingly, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that amended claim 1 and claims 2-8 and 10, which depend from amended claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

Claim 32 is directed to a method of remotely selectably controlling access to a plurality of different physical areas of a gaming machine that includes similar subject matter to amended claim 1. Accordingly, amended claim 32 and claims 33-36, which depend from amended claim 32, are each patentably distinguished over the

combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* for the same reasons provided above with respect to amended claim 1, and are in condition for allowance.

Amended claim 37 is directed to an apparatus for remotely selectively controlling access to a lock mechanism associated with a physical area on each of a plurality of gaming machines. The apparatus includes a plurality of electrically operable locked mechanisms each associated with one of the plurality of physical areas at each of a plurality of gaming machines where each lock is physically moveable between an unlocked and locked position condition. The apparatus includes control circuitry that is independent of the gaming machines and has a processor that operates under the control of the stored program and is coupled to each of the locked mechanisms via a communications link. The apparatus further includes a data storage retrieval system that is adapted to communicate with the processor and includes a storage medium for storing personnel identification data and access authorization data associated with the physical areas, if any, of the gaming machines for which a person seeking access is authorized. The processor is operable to compare the inputted personnel identification data by the person with personnel identification stored by the storage media and causes at least one of the lock mechanisms associated with the physical areas at each of the gaming machines to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those physical areas when the personnel identification data inputted by the person matches any of the personnel identification that is stored by the storage media.

Amended claim 37 is therefore directed to an apparatus which unlocks at least one lock associated with a physical area of each of a plurality of gaming machines based on personnel identification data inputted by a person. This saves substantial time because the person does not have to unlock each of the locks of the physical

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areas at each of the plurality gaming machines or input their personnel identification

data at each of the gaming machines. The combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does

not disclose or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 37.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that:

> Applicant argues that neither Luciano nor Graham teaches operation of a plurality of locks from input on a single gaming machine. Clearly Luciano does teach more than one lock on a single gaming machine. Applicant appears to be arguing that Luciano and Graham do not open a plurality of locks because of a single entry on a single gaming machine or at a single data entry point. This is not commensurate with the scope of the claims. Examiner notes, however, that such systems are so well known that they [sic] is an entire class/subclass (70/264) for such locks. Examiner has listed a number of such systems as additional art below in an effort to guide Applicant should he consider amending the claims. (See the Final Office Action, p. 5).

With respect to claim 37, Applicants are not simply arguing that the claimed

invention unlocks a plurality of locks based on personnel identification data entered at a

single data entry point or at a single gaming machine. Instead, the claimed invention is

directed to an apparatus that unlocks a lock associated with a physical area at each of a

plurality of gaming machines. The claimed invention, therefore, can unlock one or more

of the locks associated with the physical areas at each of a plurality or group of gaming

machines. This saves considerable time because an authorized person can move from

machine to machine without having to unlock the specific physical areas of those

machines or input data at each of those machines to unlock those physical areas.

The Examiner states that Applicants' arguments are "not commensurate" with the

scope of the claims. Applicants have amended claim 37 to be commensurate with the

Applicants' arguments made in the previous response and in this response. Amended

claim 37 states that the apparatus includes "a plurality of electrically operable lock

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mechanisms, each respectively associated with one of the plurality of physical areas" of each of a plurality of gaming machines. Amended claim 37 further states that the processor compares the personnel identification data inputted by the person at one of the gaming machines to cause the lock mechanisms of the physical areas at each of the gaming machines to which access is authorized to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those physical areas.

The Examiner indicates that the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose or suggest the subject matter of claim 37. However, the Examiner states that systems which open a plurality of locks based on a single entry at a single location or data entry point is very well known and provides a number of references that allegedly teach this subject matter. Applicants submit, however, that the additional references cited by the Examiner are directed to systems which control the plurality of locks from a central computer or processor which is already disclosed in *Graham*. These references do not disclose or suggest opening one or more locks associated with a plurality of physical areas at each of a plurality of gaming machines or locations based on a single input or data entry at a gaming machine or location.

One of the additional references, U.S. Patent No. 5,588,317 to Bianco ("*Bianco*"), is directed to a method and apparatus for sequentially unlocking compartments of different systems. Each subsequent door unlocks only when the previous door has been closed. *Bianco*, therefore, does not disclose or suggest unlocking a plurality of doors based on personnel identification data entered at a single input device and, in fact, teaches away from such subject matter because *Bianco* only discloses having one door unlocked and open at a time.

Also, none of the additional references disclose or suggest unlocking an access device such as a door associated with a physical area at each of a plurality of gaming machines based on personnel identification data inputted at a data input device connected to one of the gaming machines.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that amended claim 37 is patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and the additional references listed by the Examiner, and is in condition for allowance.

Newly added dependent claims 38, 39 and 40 state that at least one of the lock mechanisms includes a solenoid having a plunger. The plunger is moveable between a retracted position when the solenoid is energized to enable a mechanical key to be used to unlock the lock mechanism and an extended position when the solenoid is de-energized to prevent the mechanical key from being used to unlock the locked mechanism. This feature prevents the use of an override key when the solenoid is de-energized, such as when the power goes out due to a storm or other power outage.

Neither *Luciano*, *Graham*, nor the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham*, disclose or suggest such subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants submit that new claims 38, 39 and 40 are patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham*, and in condition for allowance.

In light of the above, Applicants submit that claims 1-8, 10, 32-37 and new claims 38, 39 and 40, are each patentable over the art of record because the cited art does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of these new claims. Accordingly, Applicants request that claims 1-8, 10, and 32-40 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

A check in the amount of $790.00 is submitted herewith to cover the fee for the RCE. If any other fees are due in connection with this application, the Examiner is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 19-1351. If such withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (25814-403120) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on September 28, 2006.

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